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President: Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic)
(Vice-President)

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In the absence of Mr. Gervais (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEMES
(continued)

- (b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS ON THE THEME OF THE 1995 COORDINATION SEGMENT OF THE COUNCIL (continued) (E/1996/L.21)

The PRESIDENT invited the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution E/1996/L.21, entitled "Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227: initiation of reviews".

Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of Canada, Norway and the Russian Federation, said its purpose was to clarify the implementation mechanisms of provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, without in any way anticipating or prejudging the results of the reviews called for. His delegation commended the draft resolution to the Council for full and prompt implementation.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

- (b) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES ON A SYSTEM-WIDE BASIS: STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS IN THE AREAS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING THE FIELD LEVEL (continued) (E/1996/L.20)

The PRESIDENT invited the representative of Costa Rica to introduce draft resolution E/1996/L.20, entitled "Strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions".

Mrs. CHAVES (Costa Rica), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, commended the draft resolution to the Council and expressed the hope that it could be adopted by consensus.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1996/76)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to the report of the Committee for Development Planning on its thirtieth session (E/1996/76) and said he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

- (a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1996/15, E/1996/28, E/1996/63, E/1996/66, and E/1996/84)
- (d) NATURAL RESOURCES (continued) (E/1996/31)
- (e) ENERGY (continued) (E/1996/24)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to four documents under agenda item 6 (a), "Sustainable development", dealing with the issue of the periodicity of amendments to the Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: a note by the Secretary-General transmitting an extract from the report of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods on its eighteenth session (E/1996/66); a letter from the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (E/1996/15); a letter from the Director-General of the International Air Transport Association addressed to the Secretary-General (E/1996/63); and a letter from the Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (E/1996/84).

As the issue was scheduled to be discussed at the next session of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, and also in view of the recommendation of the Council's Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, he suggested that the Council should postpone its own discussion of the issue until its 1997 substantive session.

Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) said that his delegation fully supported the recommendation of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), contained in document E/1996/15, that the publication cycle of the Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods should be expanded from every two to every four years so as to facilitate smooth and timely harmonization among the different modes of transport.

Mr. MITROPOULOS (International Maritime Organization) cited the legislative and administrative burden on Governments and the industry entailed

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under the current biennial schedule of publication, and, supported by Ms. IRISH (Canada), reiterated the request of MSC for such publication to be put on a quadrennial basis.

Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America), supported by Mr. AADAL (Observer for Norway), said that in view of the already existing time lag between amendment and implementation of the recommendations, expanding their schedule of publication would only further delay their taking effect. Her delegation therefore favoured maintaining the current publication schedule and deferring further discussion of the topic until the Council's 1997 substantive session.

Mr. GRAY (Australia), Ms. HARRIS (United Kingdom), Mr. YOSHINO (Japan), Mr. ABOUCHAAR (International Air Transport Association) and Mr. CRUZ DE MELLO (Brazil) said that they, too, would like discussion of the topic to be postponed until the 1997 substantive session, when the Council could benefit from the conclusions of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

The PRESIDENT said it seemed that the prevailing view of delegations was to postpone any final decision on the agenda item under discussion and to await the results of the December 1996 session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) requested that the President should give the delegations time to consult with their Governments before the Council took any decision in the matter.

The PRESIDENT said that in order to accommodate the representative of Greece the Council would return to the question under discussion the following week.

He drew attention to the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its fourth session in document E/1996/28, the report of the Committee on Natural Resources on its third session in document E/1996/31 and the report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development on its second session in document E/1996/24.

Mr. GECHEV (Bulgaria), speaking as Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, said that over the past four years the Commission had established itself as a central intergovernmental forum for follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the implementation

of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. That had been possible because of Governments' commitment to sustainable development and the constructive support which the Commission had received from the entire United Nations system and other international institutions.

The real test of the Commission's vitality and of the overall impact of the Rio Conference would however occur at the 1997 special session of the General Assembly, when the international community would review the progress achieved in implementing the Rio commitments and discuss appropriate strategies for implementation in the coming years. The objectives of the 1997 review should include the strengthening of the commitment to sustainable development at the international, national and local levels, pinpointing the reasons for the failure to meet certain goals, identifying innovative approaches to cooperation and financial assistance, and defining priorities for the period beyond 1997.

Turning to the outcomes of the Commission's fourth session (E/1996/28, chap. I), he expressed the hope that the Council would adopt the draft resolution on institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, the draft decision on matters relating to the third and fourth sessions of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the draft decision on the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its fourth session and the provisional agenda for the fifth session. Bearing in mind the need for active involvement of non-governmental organizations in the preparations of the 1997 special session, he urged the Council to support the Commission's recommendation to keep those non-governmental organizations accredited by Council decision 1993/220 on the roster, as envisaged in Council decision 1993/215.

Ms. BETTELLI (Colombia) said that her delegation welcomed the report on the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. With regard to decision 4/15, on the protection of the atmosphere and protection of the oceans and all kinds of seas, her delegation believed that protection of the atmosphere and protection of the oceans could not always be linked together. The decision implied that in order to be considered for international cooperation, a project on marine protection would also have to show it had an effect on the atmosphere, which would not always be feasible.

With regard to the coordination of international cooperation in the marine environment, the Commission was required to conduct a periodic overall review of all aspects of the marine environment and its related issues as described in chapter 17 of Agenda 21. She pointed out, however, that the legal framework for that review went beyond the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, since there were other binding international instruments regarding the protection of the marine environment.

Mr. WANG Xuexian (China) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development had put forward some valuable suggestions relating to the implementation of Agenda 21. The developing countries had made substantial progress promoting coordinated development in the economic, environmental and social spheres and had overcome various difficulties, relying on their own efforts. Although the international community had made some progress with respect to bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of environment and development, its efforts were inadequate considering the comprehensive scope of the decisions adopted at the Rio Conference. The international community had yet to take significant action to assist the developing countries to achieve economic growth and promote environmental protection within their borders. Funding was inadequate, barriers to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies on preferential terms persisted and discriminatory trade policy measures continued to masquerade as environmental protection measures. Developing countries increasingly were expected to assume the same obligations as developed countries with respect to patterns of production and consumption and sustainable development standards, notwithstanding their low levels of economic and technological development.

In order to reverse those unhealthy trends, the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 1997 should delve into their causes and propose action-oriented solutions to correct the problems.

The international community must reiterate the political commitment made at Rio to establish a new global partnership to achieve sustainable development on a global scale. It was also necessary to reaffirm the commitments of the international community on the principles of coordination between environmental protection and development, common but differentiated responsibilities and the need to take into consideration the special situation of the developing countries.

At its next session, the Commission on Sustainable Development should make an overall assessment of international cooperation in the field of environment and development in recent years and analyse the root causes of slow follow-up action, with a view to making practical recommendations on priority areas for cooperation which the General Assembly could act on at its special session in 1997.

His delegation was in favour of properly analysing the feasibility of proposed new and innovative funding mechanisms and their potential impact. However, any new measures should supplement official development assistance and should not serve as a pretext for shirking obligations with regard to financial resources. Solid progress towards making sustainable development a reality was possible if the international community sincerely adhered to the principles endorsed at Rio.

Mr. MURPHY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the success of the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The high-level segment, which had been extremely well attended, had concentrated on preparations for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly, at which the future role and working methods of the Commission would be discussed. The discussion on the need for improved international coordination on oceans was of particular importance. The Commission had stressed that agreements in the area of atmospheric protection required cooperation at all levels.

The fourth session had also covered cross-sectoral themes such as consumption and production patterns, trade and environment and indicators. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Commission had adopted a decision regarding a programme on education. However, it was regrettable that discussions on core agenda items had sometimes repeated earlier agreements and even attempted to reopen already agreed language. His delegation welcomed the participation in the Commission's work of such major groups as business people, scientists, farmers and local communities and hoped that that type of participation would be strengthened.

Mr. ISAKOV (Russian Federation) said his delegation supported the adoption of the draft resolution on institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. While the Commission had

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succeeded at its fourth session in analysing a wide range of complex and interdependent issues related to sustainable development and had agreed upon a number of useful recommendations there continued to be a need for practical measures at the national, regional and international levels. The upcoming special session of the General Assembly would provide a comprehensive review of the Rio Conference and identify the primary problems encountered in the follow-up to that Conference. It was important to establish closer links between the Commission and other authoritative bodies and to eliminate duplication in the work being conducted under international conventions. In that regard, national policies and strategies in the area of sustainable development must be further developed. The Commission on Sustainable Development should work more closely with the Committee for Development Planning and the various scientific committees and commissions.

The recommendations of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development were of particular interest to his delegation. Those recommendations included the need to accelerate research and development in the areas of energy efficiency and commercialization of the results achieved. His delegation supported the establishment of a systematic database on the programmes and activities of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in the field of energy. That database could be placed on-line on the electronic page of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, thereby providing a link between the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and private business. His delegation also endorsed the adoption of draft resolution II on the Coordination of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in the field of energy. However, it believed that the issue should be addressed in relation to the overall task of the economic restructuring of the United Nations.

Finally, his delegation believed that the paper on the comprehensive assessment of the world's freshwater resources to be submitted to the General Assembly at its special session in 1997 should provide practical recommendations to Governments on ways to avert regional and local crises related to water resources and should discuss the use of water resources in relation to sustainable development. As Agenda 21 lacked a section devoted to mineral resources, it would be worthwhile to consider that issue within the Commission

on Sustainable Development and at the special session of the General Assembly in 1997.

Mr. CRUZ DE MELLO (Brazil) said that the work accomplished by the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests at its second session had been an important step in building consensus and that the difficulties encountered should encourage Governments to present new ideas at the next session. His delegation fully endorsed the recommendation that the Panel's fourth session should last for a period of two weeks. It also agreed that it would be appropriate for the Panel to prepare negotiated reports and conclusions.

The documents for the Panel's fourth session should, in keeping with its mandate, maintain a balanced approach to all types of forests, including temperate and boreal forests. The Panel also should encourage reflection on actions and initiatives required to resolve the problem of the undervaluation of wood and non-wood products and forest services, which were a main cause of deforestation and forest degradation.

With regard to trade, the Panel should undertake an in-depth analysis of the relevant issues. They included, the relationship between trade and environment, which should be viewed in a constructive perspective, and the Panel should condemn protectionist measures which paraded in the guise of environmental protection practices. The Panel's next report should devote careful consideration to tariff and non-tariff barriers that affected forest and forest-related products, in particular, the question of tariff escalation.

Voluntary certification schemes should be transparent, should derive from multilateral negotiations and agreements and should not be associated with environmental restrictions originating in unilateral measures. His delegation had serious doubts concerning the value of using certification schemes as an instrument to promote sustainable forest management.

Turning to international cooperation, he reiterated the importance of adhering to agreed commitments concerning official development assistance, the need for a genuine transfer of financial resources and technology and for new and additional resources. Momentary difficulties faced by donor countries should not stand in the way. A document should be prepared for the next session of the Panel on the diverse aspects of the transfer of technology and should not be limited to developments in the private sector. It should examine successful experiences in cooperation and practical examples of new and innovative options

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for technology transfer and should supply a list of available technology in both the public and private sectors. Discussions on joint ventures in the forest sector, including research, also should be included. The sustainability of forests required a broad, open debate on technology transfer and scientific research. Initiatives of countries regarding the forest process, however valuable, could not be a substitute for the work carried out by the Panel.

His delegation fully endorsed the remarks by the representative of Colombia concerning the relationship between the oceans and atmosphere and its implications for project funding by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Ms. IRISH (Canada) said that her delegation looked forward to the 1997 special session of the General Assembly to take stock of follow-up activities with respect to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Her delegation strongly supported decision 4/9 of the Commission on Sustainable Development on major groups and was particularly pleased that it recognized the importance of continuing major group participation in the Commission and recommended that all major groups participating in the Commission should be confirmed on the roster of the Economic and Social Council. Her delegation also fully welcomed the decision to ensure appropriate arrangements for major group participation at the special session of the General Assembly. The success of that session would depend on transparent and inclusive arrangements for major group involvement.

Her delegation fully endorsed Commission decision 4/11 on promoting education, public awareness and training, and she drew particular attention to its paragraph 2 (a). Education for sustainable development had been increasingly recognized as a holistic, interdisciplinary framework integrating concepts of economic and social development and environmental protection. The strategic alliance envisaged in that paragraph was a key building block for sustainable development.

Lastly, her delegation agreed that the Council should adopt the Commission's recommendations relating to the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and that it should transmit to the General Assembly the Commission's decisions on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

Mr. SYARGEEV (Belarus) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development was doing valuable work on the practical implementation of the

proposals and recommendations adopted at the Rio Conference. His delegation agreed on the need for greater effectiveness in the use of the Commission's existing resources and felt that much needed to be done to ensure that the Commission's programmes would yield tangible results. However, the Commission faced an acute shortage of financial resources, and non-traditional sources of financing would not be able to make a substantial improvement in the situation. His delegation felt that Governments should agree to earmark 0.7 per cent of gross national product for sustainable development; that would be in line with General Assembly resolution 50/227.

Belarus, as a country with an economy in transition, was hampered in its progress towards sustainable development by the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. It was trying to expand its links with all interested countries and international organizations in order to implement the provisions of Agenda 21. On the basis of those principles, his Government would be hosting in May 1997 an international conference on sustainable development of the countries with economies in transition. The conference, despite its regional nature, would be open to all interested countries and international and regional organizations that wished to participate and to institutions from individual countries. In particular, his Government invited the European Union, the World Bank, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Economic Commission for Europe, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to participate in all stages of the Conference. It hoped for close cooperation with all other interested regional and subregional cooperation bodies as well. His Government trusted that the results of the Conference would represent a tangible contribution to the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the special session of the General Assembly in 1997.

Ms. BULENOVA (Czech Republic) said that the most recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had proved the viability of the Commission, which had succeeded in attracting a truly representative group of key players representing government, business, non-government organizations and other groups. Her delegation applauded the progress made in the implementation of various provisions of Agenda 21, in particular, on issues covered by new global treaties.

The mandate of the Commission would be best fulfilled if its work focused on cross-sectoral issues in which sustainable development concerns were relevant, such as the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, economic instruments, the relationship between international trade and the environment, energy and transport. The Commission also should deal with capacity-building through the promotion of education for sustainable development.

Further efforts to shape an optimal format for the sessions of the Commission, with a clear focus on regular agenda items, was needed. The benefits of broad participation should be retained, there should be a blend of formal and informal meetings and the sessions should be as concise and transparent as possible.

With regard to restructuring, the Commission had the potential to gradually integrate various agendas. Her delegation would continue to support steps leading to closer institutional relationships among the Commission and the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development, the Committee on Natural Resources and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

With regard to the relationship and division of labour between the Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme, the Commission should strengthen its role as a policy-making body and coordinator for cross-sectoral issues relating to sustainable development, while UNEP should focus on the environmental sector.

The 1997 special session of the General Assembly should identify priorities, constraints on, and gaps in implementing Agenda 21 thus far, and should not attempt to renegotiate the agreements reached at Rio. Priority should be given at the special session to sustainable patterns of production and consumption, institutional issues, energy and transport, trade and the environment and economic instruments. In general, her delegation welcomed the shift of priorities towards so-called "driving forces". The special session also should address forest management, fresh water and education for sustainable development.

Her Government was committed to all areas of follow-up to the Rio Conference. It had helped to organize workshops on economic instruments and education for sustainable development, and those issues, as well as indicators

of sustainable development, were among the priorities on which it believed the Commission on Sustainable Development should focus in the future.

Mr. NAZARI TAJABADI (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran), referring to paragraph 2 (a) of decision 4/12 of the Commission on Sustainable Development, said that coercive economic measures and unilateral action by some developed countries to the detriment of certain developing countries were inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations and ran counter to the internationally recognized need to promote capacity-building in the developing countries.

Paragraph 1 (n) of Commission decision 4/13, on changing production and consumption patterns, noted the trend towards a global consensus on the importance of such changes in the context of common but differentiated responsibilities. His delegation believed that the implementation of an international commitment on changing consumption and production patterns must not contradict the right of developing countries to benefit fully from the utilization of their own resources, which were vital to their economic growth and development.

As to financing the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, dealt with in paragraph 13 of Commission decision 4/14, it was imperative that the developed countries should honour the commitments they had undertaken in Agenda 21, in particular, to provide new and additional financial resources and to transfer environmentally sound technologies on concessional and preferential terms. Failing that, the chances of achieving the objectives of the Rio Conference were slim.

Mr. SHAH (India) said that, although his delegation appreciated the work of the Commission, thus far no concrete measures had emerged with respect to financial resources and mechanisms, the transfer of new and additional financial resources or the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. Concrete measures were needed to facilitate action in those areas in the context of the preparations for, and follow-up to, the 1997 special session of the General Assembly. Concrete progress also was needed with respect to changing consumption and production patterns and developing countries.

His delegation supported the involvement of major groups at the special session of the General Assembly, on the understanding that any relevant proposals by the Commission's Chairman would reflect the manner in which those

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groups had participated in other special sessions of the General Assembly and that it would be explicitly understood that such provisions would apply to their participation in future such sessions, including those not concerned with the economic and social activities of the United Nations.

Mr. GOU MENNY (Observer for Ukraine) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development was becoming an important political mechanism for promoting sustainable development at the international and national levels. His delegation fully supported the view that the Commission should retain its primary role of leadership on basic issues of sustainable development and as a forum for the review of efforts undertaken at the national, regional and international levels.

His delegation supported the organization of work of the Commission and attached particular importance to the high-level segment, which should be further activated. The thematic panels were very useful but there should not be too many of them and the topics should be carefully defined and linked with the agenda of the session; not only government representatives, but also representatives of private enterprise, scientific circles and public organizations, should participate in the panels. The work of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests was encouraging. However, the potential of the Commission was not being fully utilized. His delegation agreed on the need for greater coordination of the Commission's work with other bodies in the area of the environment and development. The Commission needed to seek new ways of implementing decisions already adopted, to limit the number of issues it took up, and to concentrate on the most important problems, including population, poverty, trade, and sustainable industrial development. A system of criteria for evaluating sustainable development should be worked out, which could be incorporated in the economic policy of interested States, taking into account the characteristics of each country. The Commission could promote exchanges of experience and closer international cooperation.

The problem of establishing an optimal regime for the transfer of environmentally clean technologies was particularly important for Ukraine, as a country with an economy in transition. Since the effective implementation of the concept of sustainable development was very difficult for many developing countries and countries with economies in transition, his delegation agreed that a new strategy of official development assistance with a strictly differentiated

nature needed to be worked out which would take into account the levels of development of different countries. The Commission could play an important role in that respect. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly, at its special session in 1997, would clarify the role of the Commission in the context of the reform of the socio-economic sector of the United Nations and the decisions of recent United Nations conferences.

Mrs. WRONECKA (Poland) commended the Commission on Sustainable Development for the work it had accomplished at its fourth session. A careful analysis of the Commission's report (E/1996/28) showed that significant gaps persisted with respect to instruments for sustainable development, which were of equal and crucial importance for the successful implementation of Agenda 21.

Firstly, financial resources for sustainable development currently were inadequate. Furthermore, with regard to education for sustainable development, only credible, stable local policies could provide the basis for generating domestic and international resources for development, and such policies could be drafted only by well-educated authorities. Her delegation agreed that regional centres for the transfer of curricula, education techniques and tools should be established. Lastly, she emphasized the importance of an integrated approach to the various issues dealt with in Agenda 21 and of strengthening coordination among the various international organizations concerned with the subject.

Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that her delegation fully endorsed the recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development adopted at its fourth session. The participation of non-governmental organizations in activities relating to preparations for the special session of the General Assembly scheduled for 1997, and at the session itself, should be governed by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Mr. VARCHAVER (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that the Union encouraged parliamentary action to implement Agenda 21. It considered that the provision of adequate financing and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies were essential for the achievement of sustainable development. Evaluations conducted by member parliaments in recent years indicated that difficulties relating to those questions had gravely hindered efforts to implement the Agenda. Document E/1996/NGO/2 detailed the contribution which Inter-Parliamentary Union proposed to make to the assessment and evaluation of the progress achieved since the Rio Conference.

National parliaments, which represented the common interest of the various components of civil society, provided the legislative framework for sustainable development activities, monitored the activities of Governments, including in the field of sustainable development, and engaged in a continuous dialogue with constituents which served to build awareness among the general public of sustainable development issues. Accordingly, Inter-Parliamentary Union had proposed that henceforth, national parliaments should be added to the category of major groups within the meaning of the term used in Agenda 21. Such a step would be a further manifestation of the closer cooperation between the United Nations and Inter-Parliamentary Union called for by the General Assembly in resolution 50/15.

Ms. VON ROEMER (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)) said that ICFTU, which represented some 127 million workers on all continents, appreciated the innovative working methods adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development. The practice of panel presentations followed by dialogue could be an effective means of bringing the real world into the conference room. The Day of the Workplace had brought together business and trade union leaders from industrial and developing countries who had given graphic illustrations of cooperation between business and labour to create a safer and healthier environment, demonstrating that job creation and environmental protection could be mutually supportive. ICFTU hoped that in its future work, the Commission would build on those findings and focus on the workplace. What was needed was a worldwide plan for joint environmental management initiatives between employers and trade unions at the workplace.

ICFTU strongly supported the proposal made during the high-level segment of the Commission that the question of employment creation by means of sustainable development strategies should be placed on the agenda of the next session. The issue would also need to be addressed by the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group at its next session.

Mr. MURPHY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union believed that the Committee on Natural Resources had a useful task to accomplish, particularly in the area of water technology. It noted that the Committee had moderated its demands for reports and studies on a wide range of issues, many of which were covered by the Commission on

Sustainable Development; that highlighted the need for a review of the Committee's relationship with the Commission.

The Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development continued to be a useful forum for addressing issues relating to the energy needs of developing countries. The European Union had reservations on holding a United Nations conference on energy, however, and expected that the report to be prepared on the subject would consider all possible options for a high-level discussion.

The European Union agreed that the activities of the United Nations system in the field of energy must be better coordinated; however, the need for a new institution had not been demonstrated.

In draft decision I, the Committee addressed the need to continue subsidies and other forms of direct and indirect support. That question should be carefully considered, taking into account the situation of individual countries, as well as current thinking by the international community.

The European Union welcomed the inclusion of both Committees in the Council's review of its functional commissions and expert bodies provided for in General Assembly resolution 50/227.

Mr. SHAH (India) said that his delegation supported the reports of the two committees and recommended approval of the resolutions and decisions contained in them. The proposal to convene an international conference on energy was still at a preliminary stage, so that it was difficult to understand the hesitations that were being voiced. The Council should adopt the decisions and resolutions on which there were no reservations and try to harmonize its position on the others.

Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that her Government strongly supported efforts to encourage the management of water resources and sustainable exploitation of mineral resources. It was not clear, however, that the Committee on Natural Resources was making a contribution to those efforts that would justify the expense of its continued operation. Since all activities of interest to the Committee were being conducted by other bodies, with the Committee only reviewing and commenting on them, her delegation believed that the Committee's functions should be merged into the Commission on Sustainable Development. Proper attention to the mineral and water sectors and their relation to the environment, keyed to each country's particular

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circumstances, should form part of national sustainable development strategies. An open investment climate, sound macroeconomic policies, effective environmental regulation and resource conservation policies, combined with innovative public-private financing schemes, could generate the resources and provide the framework for the sustainable use and management of water and mineral resources.

Her delegation felt that a United Nations conference on energy would serve no useful purpose sufficient to justify its expense. No additional institutions were needed to address energy issues; existing entities should suffice. Her delegation believed that the functions of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development should be merged into the Commission on Sustainable Development. National energy strategies and policies were essential, either in parallel with or as part of national sustainable development strategies. An open investment climate and sound energy policy were the best means of attracting the financial resources needed for rural electrification; innovative financing schemes could enable even poor rural consumers to afford renewable-based electricity.

Mr. HAMAD (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that UNESCO had undertaken to organize the World Solar Summit as a concrete response to the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. A World Solar Commission had been created with a view to adopting, in September 1996, a declaration on renewable energy sources and a plan of action. The World Solar Summit would convene in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 16 and 17 September 1996 under the chairmanship of President Mugabe, the Chairman of the World Solar Commission. UNESCO hoped that the initiative would be considered a major United Nations system-wide endeavour and that, once adopted, the declaration would be given the broadest possible dissemination not only among Member States but also within the relevant intergovernmental and inter-agency mechanisms of the United Nations system. UNESCO looked forward to the continued support of the United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP and the World Bank, and of other partners outside the United Nations system.

The PRESIDENT drew attention to the draft resolution and the two draft decisions contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/1996/28). In addition, he drew

attention to decision 4/15, which recommended that the Council should approve a number of conclusions addressing issues relating to international cooperation and coordination, subject to the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly in 1997 at which the Assembly would, inter alia, decide on the future work programme of the Commission.

He took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft resolution entitled "Institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities".

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to adopt draft decision I entitled "Matters relating to the third and fourth sessions of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests" bearing in mind the programme budget implications, contained in annex III to the report.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to adopt draft decision II entitled "Report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its fourth session and provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Commission".

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT read out an oral draft decision, for adoption by the Council:

"The Economic and Social Council decides to keep those non-governmental organizations so accredited to the Council by its decision 1993/220 on the roster and invites the General Assembly to ensure, in conformity with Assembly resolution 50/113, appropriate arrangements for the most effective contributions to and active involvement of major groups, including non-governmental organizations, in the special session of the General Assembly in 1997".

Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that it was her delegation's understanding that decision 1993/220 had granted provisional roster status to non-governmental organizations. The words "so accredited to" should therefore be changed to "granted provisional roster status on".

Mr. SHAH (India) said that, with the United States amendment, it would not be clear whether non-governmental organizations which had been placed provisionally on the roster would continue to be provisionally included.

Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that he shared the Indian representative's concern and inquired what was meant by "major groups".

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Mr. STOBY (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said, that as the Secretariat understood it, the intent of the draft decision was to confirm that those non-governmental organizations to which decision 1993/220 referred would be permanently placed on the roster. The use of the word "provisional" might introduce some confusion as to the past and future status of those non-governmental organizations.

The definition and categorization of "major groups" was used in Agenda 21 and elsewhere and the term was well understood.

Mr. SHAH (India) asked whether non-governmental organizations which had participated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development were being treated differently from other non-governmental organizations; a non-discriminatory approach must be adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council would take action on the draft decision at a subsequent meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.